

HB 301 -- PAROLE HEARINGS

SPONSOR: Hill

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Corrections and Public Institutions by a vote of 10 to 1. Vote "Do Pass" by the Standing Committee on Rules-Legislative Oversight by a vote of 8 to 3.

Currently, the use of videoconferencing must not be used if the offender, the victim, or the victim's family objects. This bill removes the offender from the list of individuals who can object. The bill also removes the requirement that the parole board conduct a personal interview with the offender, permitting the interview to be conducted via videoconferencing.

This bill is the same as HB 1585 (2016).

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that parole hearings being conducted over video-conferencing has provided the state a tremendous financial savings. However, hearings are required to be conducted in person if an offender or a victim or the victim's family objects to video-conferencing. Oftentimes, inmates request an in-person hearing because they want a change of scenery. This bill takes out the offender's ability to object to a video-conferenced hearing, though he or she may still request one.

Testifying for the bill was Representative Hill.

OPPONENTS: There was no opposition voiced to the committee.